



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0358TX-1 for Mathis ISD

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant reportedly serves rural high needs schools. The stated vision involves a project to instill ownership in a successful transformation including enhanced student governance/engagement, enhanced teacher governance/engagement, enhanced parent participation, and flattening of the organization to distribute the leadership. Furthermore, the applicant proposes a "360 model" referring to transparency throughout the project. The applicant describes the model with an outer circle representing stakeholders who will support and sustain the project, and an inner circle with school administrators, the teachers, and students. This section emphasizes transparency. While this is admirable, it seems that transparency should already be apart of the district. The emphasis on utilizing Skidmore-Tynan as a 'living mentor model' is seemingly positive. The emphasis on dual credit course seems problematic in that it requires teachers to receive master's degree. It's also not clear that this will inherently increase the quality of education, the deepening of student learning, and acceleration of student learning.</p> <p>The connection of the districts with specified oil and gas companies seems to raise many potential issues. It's unclear why these companies would not support their own job training. There are details in this section that speak to many of the specified requirements in the proposal. Nonetheless, a comprehensive and coherent reform vision is lacking.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: <p>All school districts and campuses serve 40% or higher low socioeconomic students. Some schools are higher than 90%.</p> <p>From this section, it's not clear the extent to which the applicant's approach to implementing its reform proposal will support high-quality implementation of the proposal. There is no description of the process the applicant used to select schools being targeted.</p> <p>This section details the total number of participating students, details those students who are 'high-need' (as defined by the notice), and lists the participating number of educators.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant has provided details of a quality plan and specified their goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. This section primarily details a quality plan, and describes how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools. The use of intensive professional development focused on CSCOPE curriculum alignment seems</p>		

feasibleThe applicant specifies that curriculum alignment will be facilitated through various means including employ of regional service center, including staff with expertise in core curriculum alignment. Two other positive aspects of this section and plan is use of a trainer of trainer model and analysis of data including formative and summative student data to drive instruction. Professional development will be overseen by the university partner Texas A&M University – Kingsville. The use of instructional coaches on campuses seems like an appropriate way to increase the scalability. This applicant has also specified use of data specialists budgeted through this proposal to facilitate processing of data. The applicant also seeks to increase leadership effectiveness through administrator participation in professional development and through evaluation. The applicant has also specified use of the Model Classroom Project. The applicant has targeted increased learning time through extending the school day and maximizing bell-to-bell instruction monitored by principal walkthroughs and peer observations. The applicant has also proposed to increase parent/community involvement through hiring a parent liason for each district. This seems like a positive approach that will help build cohesion between the stated reform agenda and the community. The approach to increased teacher quality by providing multiple means of professional development opportunities including peer-to-peer observations seems advantageous.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	4
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

It's not clear from this section that the applicant's vision will likely to result in improved student learning, performance, and increased equity. The applicant states that the development of performance goals was recently undertaken. They are not specified here. The use of a comprehensive needs assessment seems positive, but the results are not specified here. Therefore, there are no goals aligned with the needs assessment. The process is detailed here, but specifics are lacking. The chart does specify some intended outcomes related to the goals. The various activities are heavily oriented toward the first two goals. For example, out of the 10 activities, 8 are focused primarily on the first two goals. In addition, the variables between the activities and the goals make the potential for completion unclear. For example, the fourth activity states that, "districts hire all professional positions for the STX360 project." This is oriented to the second goal, which is to "decrease achievement gaps between all subpopulations." The connection between the two, or how one will lead to the other is not clear.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>The districts show a record of sporadic success over the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement, but the applicant's districts have demonstrated success across 'subgroups', which indicates a positive emphasis on equity. This also indicates a potential to improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps. In the area of high school graduation rates, progress was more sporadic. However, most schools have shown progress. Some of the schools have high graduation rates, which might make the graphed changes appear more dramatic. Many of the schools had a decrease in college enrollment between the 2010/2011 school year and the 2011/2012 school year. Though across the board the overall number remained about even at roughly 52%.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant makes clear a high level of transparency in terms of teacher and administrator salary. Salary data is published in a variety of different forums. Expenditures and financial resource data and decisions are also</p>		

disclosed. This seems like it's connected to state mandates, as well as by district choice. The applicant participates in an annual state publication, which details salaries. The applicant's state also makes a variety of data available online through a webpage. The provided a sample of the available data sets in the appendix, and this data was specific to the financial matters involving staffing and instruction for applicant's district. State newspapers publish personnel salaries for teachers and public school administrators. The applicant's state also has a financial accountability rating system with the stated purpose of ensuring that school districts and open-

enrollment charter schools are held accountable for the quality of their financial management practices and achieve improved performance in the management of their financial resources.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)

10

7

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

According to the applicant, as long as schools follow mandated state curriculum, how public school districts achieve student results is determined by individual public school districts. This seemingly allows for personalization of learning environments.

The applicant cites the fact that school districts have “followed the lead of research-based best practices with regard to implementation of instructional strategies such as facilitating collaborative work environments through the facilitation of professional learning communities, smaller learning communities, academic teams/houses, etc.” It is not clear if the applicant has utilized these various approaches. It is clear that the applicant utilizes a ‘Response to Intervention’ (RtI) process a one form of personalized learning. This is a type of mandate that requires the applicant to personalize learning for students. One problem with the reliance on this mandate, is the aspect of being an ‘intervention’, meaning the approach occurs after a student is identified as having problems in school. It is reactive. The applicant is less clear about proactive approaches to personalized learning environments, though there is seemingly a commitment to the philosophical basis of this approach.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

2

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

There is no is no real discussion, or very limited discussion by the applicant regarding exactly how the proposal was “shaped” through interaction. There were announcements made at community meetings to discuss the application. However, the extent to which this occurred is unclear. There is an extensive list of letter of support for the application. The applicant discusses the notion that rural communities are inherently communal. They are also potentially discriminatory areas that marginalize various individuals. It would have been helpful to read more about efforts made to be inclusive. For example, in a Spanish-speaking region, was the plan made available in Spanish? There is no mention of how the proposal was revised based on engagement and feedback. It is unclear if there is collective bargaining representation, and no evidence of direct engagement from teachers in the participating schools. This information was not indicated in this section. There are letters from principles, but no letters from a teachers organization was provided.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided details of a quality plan and specified their goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. There is a basic statement of the needs, and stated intention to analyze individual student data. There are fairly significant gaps in various ‘subgroups’. It’s not exactly clear how these needs, the stated data collection, and implementation of the activities will align. Nonetheless there is a clear list of activities oriented toward data driven interventions targeting specific areas of need. This data is orientated toward ‘subpopulations’ and individuals, including individualized graduation plans. Planning times have also been allocated, which seems necessary to insure implementation. The applicant describes limited and sporadic success in implementing personalized learning environments. The logic behind the reform proposal is to address the resource limitations that made the implementation of personalized learning environments sporadic.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has placed a significant emphasis on dual credit courses tied to two local institutions of higher education. The hope is to expand this program to the extent that students graduate with an associate degree. The applicant has indicated 'two remedies' to ease the transition from high school to college. This includes academic rigor and communication. The communication seems limited in the sense that the applicant appears linked primarily to two local institutions. The applicant is operating under the assumption that high school credit tied to college credit will raise the interest of students in school. The utilization of 'college nights', a college center and other efforts to engage and inform parents is promising and innovative. The activities chart often has several people (nearly all) and project participants listed as persons responsible, making it unclear who is actually responsible for the completion of the tasks. The applicant proposes reforms to help facilitate participation by educating parents and working to educate first generation college students with a pathway into higher education. The applicant has developed their plan around dual credit courses and partnership with higher education institutions.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)**20****17****(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has provided details of a quality plan and specified their goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. The applicant proposes improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment through a professional learning communities approach. The applicant states that fully implementing this is dependent upon 'common meeting time', which requires additional staff. The professional learning communities are stated to be aligned with both individual needs and rigorous coursework oriented toward career and college readiness. The reliance on Response to Intervention as a means to individualized learning seems problematic, however this section does expand on potential individualized project-based learning. In this section, one positive approach to teaching and leading that helps educators improve instruction is utilization of a model program (the Skidmore-Tynan school). The applicant is fairly detailed regarding participating educators engaging in training, and professional communities that supports individual and collective implementation of personalized learning environments. For example, the use of the Texas Project Share seems promising. The incorporation of university personnel in facilitating professional development also seems promising.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant proposes to hire 'shepherds' to facilitate communication between schools and the superintendent. The applicant has suggested practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning. The applicant has advocated provide students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, as facilitated through differentiated approaches to instruction offerings through online learning opportunities, through dual credit opportunities, credit recovery and credit acceleration opportunities. It's suggested that these "differentiated learning opportunities" will address the needs of all students and all subpopulations of students including students with disabilities and English learners. The connection here is not that clear. In other words, how online learning and the other stated approaches will inherently address the needs of all students. The applicant has proposed providing internet access for families and technical support. The applicant provides evidence that the school leadership teams in participating schools will have a level of flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators, and school-level budgets. The plan involves transparency across classrooms and the use of data</p>		

contextualized for professional learning communities. The plan involves student support facilitated through academic teams with common planning times, curriculum focus, and professional development on project-based learning. The plan involves teachers obtaining masters degree to teach dual credit course. It's not clear from the proposal if teachers want to obtain this advanced degree, if it's required, and so forth. This issue is potential problematic in terms of implementation of the plan.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has more of a vision than a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure. Nonetheless, this vision is aligned with project goals and includes instilling ownership in a successful transformation of student governance/engagement, enhanced teacher governance/engagement, enhanced parent participation, and flattening of the organization to distribute the leadership. The suggested aim is creating a sense of ownership, transparency, pride, and commitment among all stakeholders. One of the primary elements underdeveloped in this section is engagement of students and parents. There is evidence to suggest that participating students, parents, and educators will have access to content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school. This includes levels of technical support provided through online resources. The applicant provides evidence regarding information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format. This includes extending internet access to parents throughout the district. The applicant has also specified ensuring that schools use interoperable data systems.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant's strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals incorporates 'Stufflebeam's CIPP Model'. This framework includes formative and summative evaluations of projects, programs, and systems. Positive aspects of this model are an evaluation model that requires multiple perspectives, a wide range of qualitative and quantitative methods and triangulation procedures to interpret information. The applicant provides limited evidence of publicly sharing information on the quality of its investments, and a plan to extend sharing of information. The applicant provides evidence of sharing information regarding investments in professional development, technology, and staff.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant has developed opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant. The applicant has a proposed system to monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments. The applicant provides a plan to solicit feedback and monitor progress on the project, utilizing Stufflebeam's CIPP Model of Evaluation. The applicant proposes formative and summative evaluations of projects, programs and systems. According to the applicant, consortium members will receive training on the evaluation Model. The applicant reportedly will use internal evaluations conducted by "the organizations evaluators and or external evaluators." The applicant also claims the evaluation model will utilize multiple perspectives, a wide range of qualitative and quantitative methods and triangulation procedures to interpret information. The applicant claims that the emphasis of evaluation will be on the degree of transformation accomplished based on increase of teacher effectiveness, school leader effectiveness, increase in</p>		

student achievement, creation of a community centered school, development processes, on individuals, the campus dynamic, and systemic change. According to the applicant, evaluation will center on teacher professional development. The evaluation will be, according to the applicant, used to keep stakeholders informed. The applicant reports that the evaluation requirements established by USDE will be met, and that evaluation will be used to keep stakeholders informed about findings, help guide decision-making, and strengthen staff effectiveness.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals incorporates 'Stufflebeam's CIPP Model'. This framework includes formative and summative evaluations of projects, programs, and systems. Positive aspects of this model are an evaluation model that requires multiple perspectives, a wide range of qualitative and quantitative methods and triangulation procedures to interpret information.

The stated emphasis of the evaluation for the project is on the degree of transformation accomplished based on "increase of teacher effectiveness, school leader effectiveness, increase in student achievement, creation of a community centered school and the development processes on individuals and the campus dynamic, systemic change."

The proposal is lacking specific information on timelines or the intervals utilized for evaluation.

Details regarding the public posting of the project evaluation are somewhat limited. The applicant does mention posting information on a website. This section simply states that a project partner will post information online regarding progress, along with quarterly reports to schools board meetings. Since the applicant is proposing to purchase internet access for families there are extensive opportunities to report detailed information through various formats.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a clear approach to continuously improve their project plan. The professional development and activities that employ technology are specified in various sections of the proposal. It would be helpful to have more clarity in this section on how the utilization of 'Stufflebeam's CIPP Model' will align with these activities and the process for programmatic feedback and revision. The approach to utilize evaluation to inform a more productive use of time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results is limited. The details on working with community partners, related to evaluation are limited. There is also no clear compensation reform. Nonetheless, the modification of school schedules, service delivery, school leadership, and decision-making structures is a strong aspect of this section.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant's budget includes a budget narrative and tables. This narrative identifies the funds that will support the project, which are derived from the Race to the Top District grant. The funding appears sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal. There is requested funding for</p>		

activities and supplies that are not clearly tied to the proposal to an extent that they detract from the proposal; for example, a significant amount of funding for student field trips and motivational speakers. These activities would be more compelling if connected to the college readiness or other project goals. The applicant provides evidence of funding that will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period with a focus on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of personalized learning.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)**10****5****(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant relies heavily on teacher development and the pursuit of continued external funding. There is no specified financial support from State and local government leaders. The applicant indicates that funding will facilitate collaboration and a unifying focus to collectively multiple efforts across the region. The consortium desire to obtain support from their community to build in sustainability for any funding not covered after the end of the grant seems problematic. The idea of increased attendance to potentially generate additional funding seems speculative. The applicant provides a plan for long-term sustainability of district reforms after funding ends. The applicant claims that the consortium will engage in processes and behaviors that produce a continuous improvement. The applicant plans to use to provide trainer-of-trainer professional development, build relationships within the community and with higher education providers in the area, and to expand the Career and College Readiness opportunities, and encourage parents to continue sending consortium students to higher education providers for dual enrollment and vocational training. The applicant will reportedly seek support from the community to build in sustainability funding that may not be able to be covered after the end of the grant. The applicant reportedly hopes that reforms in schools in the area attract more students to the consortium's schools to potentially generate additional funding.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant has identified private resources, but external public resources are lacking. There is a plan to help augment school resources through the funding of parent liaisons and social workers that seems promising. This system has the potential to address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students. The applicant states that to date, no formal process or agency has oversight of coordinating social service agency services, but that these services do exist. The partnerships not with institutes of higher education in the surrounding area appear promising. The districts implementation of positive behavior support networks is congruent with intent of the competition. The applicant reports coherent and sustainable partnerships between their schools and social service agencies needed to serve the needs of families and children. The applicant reports that currently there is no oversight of coordinating these services, but that services exist and school administrators including campus principals, assistant principals, and counselors help direct children and families to these agencies for assistance. The applicant has reportedly formed partnerships with CVS pharmacy coming onsite to provide flu shots at no cost, Lions Clubs providing eyeglasses for high needs students, and “a myriad of other services.” The applicant has provided letters of support. The applicant had formed partnerships with multiple institutes of higher education in the surrounding area. The applicant reports that the local regional service centers have partnered to support a behavior support initiative. The applicant believes that these partnerships will provide the necessary framework/strategies for schools to continue to enhance all students by elevating effective instruction methodologies, materials and techniques.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant is reportedly focused on partnerships between schools and social service agencies that serve the needs of families and children. The applicant reports that currently there is no coordination of services. The potential for coordination is supported by letters of support in this application. The applicant’s reported partnership with institutes of higher education seems promising. The applicant has reported that local regional service centers have partnered to support a state behavior support initiative.</p>		

Total	210	148
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0358TX-2 for Mathis ISD

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates a clear and comprehensive approach to the vision that builds on the four core educational assurance areas. With references to research, the applicant cites examples of how the vision of their STX360 model refers not only to transparency throughout the proposed project, but also how they will involve all stakeholders (parents, school, students, administrators, teachers, community, university, and business partners) having opportunities to give feedback and support to improve student achievement.</p> <p>The applicant describes and gives examples of how their vision will support the four core areas. In building effective teachers, they describe how they already have initiatives in place, and an new teacher evaluation system. They also have offered technology training, in tandem with the schools that are using technology models. IN the colleg and career ready area, the district has been offering dual credit courses, and partnerships with local universities to offer courses. In using data, they do have a system in place, but it is not being maximized to its full potential, and is cumbersome to use. One of their districts is an recognized exemplary district, that will serve as a mentor district in terms of providing professional development for teachers and administrators. They are partnering with a local university to provide tuition to enable teachers to earn master's degrees in content areas that will support high school students to be career and college ready. Funding is needed to support common planning and collaboration time to use data to drive instruction and to assist teachers whose students are not achieving at high levels.</p> <p>The applicant gives a clear and concise picture of their reform vision, citing research, and giving explicit examples of their core educational assurance areas. Some of these areas have more fidelity in them than others, thus being in the top of the medium range.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates that their STX360 project seeks to involve the entire district in their application. They use a chart to list the schools, and give raw data and percentages from each school, and then the district. The total number of students in their district is 5898. They identify the participating students from low income families in the district (4379); those high-need students (2959), and participating educators (563).</p> <p>Overall, the applicant clearly and consisely addressed every criteria in this section, scoring in the top of the high range.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presents the research-based school transformation model that targets seven critical success factors that align to their performance measures throughout their application. They list specific goals to</p>		

improve academic performance, facilitated throughout the districts and campuses. They strive to increase the use of quality data to drive instruction, using software already used throughout their district, to analyze data; using the grant to budget data specialists to process data to assist teachers and administrators. They plan to increase learning time by extending the school day, and using hyper-monitoring principal walkthroughs and peer observations. They seek to increase parent/community involvement by hiring a parent liaison for each district in the application. They plan to improve the school climate by increasing student involvement through clubs and tutorials. Finally, they want to increase teacher quality by giving professional development opportunities, using Model Classroom Project instructional strategies. They define the aspects of a high quality plan, although the timeline is a bit vague.

Overall, the applicant clearly defined the facets of district wide change, and identified the model of how their plan will improve student learning, giving them a score in the medium range.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates an ambitious goal to achieve improved student performance in all goal areas with 100 percent of all students improving by SY 2015-16. The applicant sets baseline goals from grades 3-12, listing the methodology for determining status in math, reading, science, social studies, and subpopulations. They also set baselines and goals for the same grade levels and academic areas for decreasing the achievement gap.

In graduation rates, the applicant plans to raise overall rates from a baseline of 82.48% in 2010, to 100% post grant. In college enrollment, the plan is to raise this from an overall baseline of 5.7%, to a four year goal of 81%.

Overall, the applicant shows that they have ambitious but achievable goals in achievement, with a score in the high medium range.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	5

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates small but consistent trends in **closing achievement gaps in subgroups over a four year period** throughout the districts included in this applications. Mathis ISD made the biggest gains in the Special Education subgroup for reading (23 points) and in Math, the biggest gain was in the general education subgroup (11 points) . In Brooks C ISD, the biggest gains were in the Hispanic subpopulation for both reading and math. (16 points for reading and for Math). In San Diego ISD, small gains were made, with the biggest gains in Special Education for Reading (6 points) and for Math. (9 points). In the Skidmore-Tynam ISD, it was stated in the application that this district has been high performing in reading over the four year period, so they claimed that gains would be modest. The gains in Reading for most subpopulations was between 2 and 3 points. In Math, this district showed substantial gains, with a 17 point gain for the Hispanic subpopulation, 26 points for Special Education, 13 point gain in Economically Disadvantaged, and 23 points for at risk students. In the Riveria ISD, the largest gain was in Special education, with a 14 point gain; in Math, gains were only made in the Special Education subpopulation, with a 6 point gain.

In **High School graduation rates**, the results were varied between the districts included in this application, with Skidmore-Tynam ISD making the most consistent progress in increasing graduation rates. The other districts included in this application had inconsistent results in the four year period that was targeted in this application.

The applicant did not address in this section methods of achieving ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools or in its lowest performing schools. (part B) ; nor did it mention ways in which they made student performance data available to students, educators, or students in this section. (Part C).

Even though the applicant addressed Part A of this section in great detail, they did not address parts B and C, putting them in the medium range.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)

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3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates through this application that they have been transparent through many means and systems to make salary schedules available to the public and the stakeholders they serve. They demonstrate this by participation in the annual publication by the Texas Association of School Administrators and School Boards; by making it available on the Texas Education Agency website; by showing their data in the appendix of this publication, and by publishing it in local newspapers.

Overall, the applicant is consistently transparent in this section, in the medium range.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)

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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates through this section of the application that they have sufficient autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments described in their proposal. This is done through approval through the Regional Service Center 2, located in Corpus Christi Texas, which advised that as long as the districts involved follow the mandated state curriculum and the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, how the districts achieve student results are left up to the districts. They do not mention if this agency is a regulatory State agency or not.

The applicant gives further evidence of this by referencing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004), in which their districts began to develop a personalized learning approach, known as Response to Intervention, or RtI. The STX360 consortium supports the philosophy of personalized learning, and this is supported through this section by how they look through different lenses at individual students, context areas, and support for the professionals involved in collecting and using student data to design the most appropriate approach for the student(s) involved. The STX360 consortium plans to use a problem solving approach to analyze possible reasons for a students' academic or behavioral needs, and proceed appropriately.

Overall, the applicant addressed the components of this section, garnering placement in the medium range

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates that meaningful stakeholder engagement for their proposal have been described from the mandates of this section. Community meetings have shared this initiative; site-based teams of educators from the campuses and all district have given 100 percent consent to this project; and community members and organizations have given their support as well, as evidenced through letters included in their application.

The applicant did not give evidence of direct teacher engagement and support in the participating schools. It was not clear in this section whether or not this applicant had collective bargaining representation or not.

Overall, the applicant demonstrated evidence in every area of this section except teacher involvement, and feedback from this group. This places the applicant in the medium range.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates through reiteration of the achievement gap data in section B(3) that there is room for improvement in all districts involved in this application in the core areas of reading and math. They outline a plan in which the monies garnered from this grant will support common planning time for all teachers during the school day, that will give teachers time to use data gathered by the data specialists (will be funded with the monies from this grant) to inform and personalize student instruction in core areas. It will also result in scheduling students in need of intensive instruction into computer labs or tutorials.

They also provide evidence of their plan through a table that gives the goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible persons. The applicant has not implemented the personal learning environments yet, so all plans are in the beginning stages.

Overall, the evidence provided by the applicant demonstrates a thorough analysis and plan, but they have not begun to implement this as of yet. This places the applicant in the medium range.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	12
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates that they have laid the foundation for this section by defining the challenges and opportunities for small rural districts. The major focus throughout this section is to prepare and ensure that student are on track towards meeting college and career ready standards; but they take this a step furthering in giving resources and assistance to students to have dual credits in both high school and college, with the goal having associate credits by the time they graduate from High School.</p> <p>The districts in this application are already on a path to increase rigor in instruction, and to prepare students for the transition of the new State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) that is more rigorous than the previous state exam. To this end, they are planning more intensive professional development for educators to support this transition. They state that the need for alignment between high school and college is imperative to this process, but there is not any mention of how they will accomplish this.</p> <p>Through the table and timeline provided, the applicant shows that they will have a personalized graduation plan for each student, beginning in sixth grade. They list seven critical success factors that will be the core of their school reform model. They plan to provide real life opportunities for students that connect with curriculum and to observe real workforce situations. Their collaboration with local colleges and universities in providing professional development for teacher, obtaining master's degrees so that their teachers can teach college and career readiness courses, and involving parents and students in this process also demonstrates that they will be on track in meeting college and career ready standards, and have the mechanisms in place to do so.</p> <p>Overall, the applicant shows that they have a detailed and high quality plan in this section. They have goals, with responsible parties and a beginning timeline in place. This places the applicant in the medium range.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This applicant intends to demonstrate that they have a high quality plan by using a professional learning community approach to implement instructional strategies that will achieve the goal of making all students career and college ready. The STX360 projects intends to use common planning time during the regular school day .

A: They believe that using collaborative teams and professional learning communities will effectively support the implementation of personalized learning environments for all students, along with strategies, and tracking student needs to ensure that students will graduate on time, being college and career ready. One of their strategies offers an international global approach to project based learning and professional development that backs up this belief. Core content curriculum will provide opportunities for students to select their own learning opportunities, including project based learning.

The use of data, and intensive professional development for teachers in its use is part of the part to accelerate student progress. They will network within districts as well. Their affiliation with local universities will provide grant management and utilizing professors to provide continued PD. The increased learning time will also be a factor.

C: The key to implementing common planning time is leadership understanding of this model. They state research that backs up this facet of their model. Texas is implementing a new teacher appraisal system expected to begin in the SY 2014-15. They also use the TeachScape teacher appraisal system. They are going to tie professional growth based on standards that are tied to their evaluations. They will have principal, peer, and University walkthroughs that will target equity in classroom instruction. The plan does not specify hard to staff schools or specialty areas.

Overall, the applicant presents a strong plan to personalize and support the learning environment for students, with an overall score of 15.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant demonstrates that the key to the plan starts with the superintendents associated with this projects, who are committing to redefining the role of the superintendent, shifting their role from management, to becoming the instructional leaders of their districts. They will appoint a liaison that will communicate with campus principals, district STX360 coordinators, and the superintendents. This project involves transparency between all stakeholders, and with classroom instruction, and teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluations. They plan to use the Race to the Top grant monies to support capacity building with intensive professional development, and instructional strategies such as the Model Classroom project.</p> <p>The applicant will provide school leadership teams on all STX360 campuses. They will use common planning time, with a focus on curriculum and professional development on project based learning. Additional personnel funded with this grant will add support to common planning times, that will further personalize student achievement efforts. Leadership understanding is key to this facet of this section.</p> <p>The applicant plans to give students the opportunity to progress on demonstrated mastery of core subjects. There will be differentiated approaches to offerings in instruction, addressing the needs of all students and all subpopulations of students. The students will set goals that they will self-monitor, and teachers will provide instruction and support in assisting students to set and use meaningful learning</p>		

goals. State based tests, as well as other oral and written assessments will measure student learning. No one measure will determine learning and instructional decisions, giving a more holistic approach to student learning.

Overall, the applicant proves that they meet the criteria set forth in this section. They have aspects in place that will support students, and set up a rigorous environment to support a personalized learning environment. This places the applicant in the top range.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates that all stakeholders in this initiative will have equitable access to the resources needed to implement this proposal by providing internet access for all students so that online textbooks, and online opportunities to learn is given to all students and parents. They will also provide technical support for families to access these systems remotely. They plan to ensure that report card data is distributed to parents each year, and that data systems will be able to be accessed by them as well.

Overall, the applicant shows proof that they will be able to support all stakeholders with the support that they need to resources and to pertinent data, garnering them a score in the top range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant demonstrates that they have a plan in place to solicit feedback and monitor progress by using the Stufflebeam's CIPP Model of Evaluation. All consortium members will receive training on the CIPP model. This model questions context, inputs, processes, and products. The target evaluation will be focused on the increase of teacher and school leader effectiveness, an increase in student achievement, and the process by which students master subjects to be college and career ready. This evaluation will keep all stakeholders informed, and to examine whether or not programs and activities need to be modified or changed. Summative evaluation will be kept on impact in the classroom, and evidenced on continued student achievement. Overall, the applicant demonstrates that they will monitor, measure, and share information on the quality of the investments funded by the Race to the Top grant, deserving a score of 12.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant demonstrates that it has numerous means of engaging with both internal and external stakeholders in this plan. Through the STX360 model, a council will be formally established that will keep communication open concerning the facets and progress of this grant. They will provide opportunities for quarterly stakeholder input on the project, and will set up a website that will allow all stakeholders to provide input through chat and blogging, also being able to access information about the grant as well. Overall, the applicant has a high quality and defined plan in place for communication and input, being in the top range.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates that it has a high quality and clear approach to continuously improve their plan, as indicated by the table that they provide. They address performance measures in all age categories and subgroups, and how they will improve the teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluation systems.

The applicant does not indicate specific activities that they will implement to improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge the implementation progress, but does mention that they will review and update annual goals on student achievement in assessments.

Overall, the applicant does meet the criteria for a high quality and clear approach to continuously improve their plan, earning a score in the top range.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)**5****3****(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant demonstrated that there were plans in place to evaluate the effectiveness of their grant, however, it was limited in places. It would have been to have clarity in this section. They did lay out within a table goals, key activities, responsible persons, and how the grant would be adapted if it wasn't working according to plan. It was hard to see comprehensive reform, and professional development could have been more aligned.

Overall, the applicant scored in the medium range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant demonstrates that their proposed budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of their proposal. Each budget request in their application reflects the reforms, strategies, and goals listed throughout their application. They clearly identified funds that will support the proposal, and identified those funds that will be used for one time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs. The one question that is raised is the fact that the district is budgeting for master's degrees for dual credit. How will they adjust if teachers do not select to complete this? Overall, the applicant does a very thorough job in describing the components of their budget, with a final score of 7		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant demonstrates that much forethought has gone into the sustainability of this project after the term of the grant. The STX360 consortium is hoping that by the innovations provided by the grant, they will attract more student into their schools, garnering more money from the state. They hope to seek support from the community to build in sustainability after the grant is complete. The consortium plans to actively look for other grant sources throughout the term of this grant. They believe that by providing extensive professional development, teacher leaders will continue to be able to train new teachers in their reform initiatives.		

The applicant will be viewing each activity and reform for sustainability and being an effective change agent. Their partnership with their local university and aggressive grant writing will assist in future funding for their reforms. They demonstrate their commitment to sustainability of their goals by a chart that gives activities, timelines, deliverables, and the responsible parties that will make this a reality. There was not an indication of a budget that would be needed three years after the term of the grant.

Overall, the applicant gives a clear picture of how they will sustain this reform after the grant is finished, giving it a score of 8.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant conveys in this section of the application that they are in the beginning stages in integrating and developing sustainable partnerships between the STX360 consortium and agencies throughout their community. At this moment, there are informal partnerships between schools and community resources, although there were many letters of support from small businesses to support families and children.</p> <p>The applicant does plan through this grant to employ a Parent liaison in each STX360 district, whose primary goal will be to work in each district to provide resources for families, keep stakeholders apprised of the components of the grant, to inventory needs, and assess the STX360 consortiums' progress in implementing its plan.</p> <p>The applicant is beginning to work with the Coalition for Community Schools Toolkit; using this resource as a way to facilitate and service social services to parents and families within their consortium.</p> <p>The applicant does not identify how they will use performance measures for the targeted population, nor does it mention the desired results for students.</p> <p>Overall, the applicant is in the formative stages of integrated services, giving it a score of 6.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant clearly demonstrates how it will build on core educational areas to create learning environments that will improve learning and teaching. The STX360 consortium plans to use common planning time to look at data, trends, curriculum, and to address whether or not it is a curriculum concern or an instructor concern. Through the use of hyper classroom walkthroughs for teachers, principals, and superintendents, there are lenses that will help determine means of support needed, or strategies that are worth emulating and sharing.</p> <p>The applicant showed through the use of data how it plans to personalize for each student a personalized learning environment, starting in the sixth grade, and continuing through High School. This consortium is working in tandem with a local university to provide support to teachers through professional development, offering Masters degrees so that teachers will be able to offer dual credit courses in High School, with the goal being an associate degree by the time the student graduates from High School. They also plan to</p>		

support these students with real life experiences, taking field trips that will expose them to real world situations.

In decreasing achievement gaps, the plan is to use the common planning time during the school day to disaggregate data, work on best practices, and support educators in professional development in best practices. They plan to involve the community in sustaining this project, actively seeking grants and community support to continue their reforms after the term of the grant.

Overall, the applicant meets the criteria for Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	146
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0358TX-3 for Mathis ISD

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>1. The STX360 Consortium articulates a vision that supports comprehensive and coherent reform.</p> <p>a. Details regarding the consortium's partner schools, including strengths, describe the reform philosophy and how it will be implemented to meet the needs of the population served. Strengths include the following: Skidmore-Tynan ISD being recognized as an exemplary district, two of Mathis ISD's campus's involvement in the International Schools Network, and all STX360 districts receiving Gold Performance Acknowledgements for either Recommended High School Programs or as College-Ready Graduates. The vision's implementation includes providing student access to a minimum of 24 college credit hours through a combination of credit opportunities with the ultimate goal of having students graduate with a technical certification/degree or multiple college credit hours.</p> <p>b. Specific academic supports, to build personalized learning environments, are listed, including tutorial opportunities, differentiated instruction, project-based learning, and access to varied college and career pathways.</p> <p>c. Research-based references are provided to support the plan and vision. Examples include: Spillane-distributed leadership, Marzano-collaborative activities, McKenzie, Skrla, & Scheurich-excellence and equity of work, and Cifuentes, Maxwell, & Bulu-technology as a driver of school reform.</p> <p>2. The STX360 Consortium plan includes the employment of data specialists to manage and disaggregate data and additional personnel to ensure common planning time and provide for collaborative efforts. However, the continued funding for the positions is a cause for concern or is problematic since it is not clear how the positions will continue to be funded once the grant ends.</p> <p>3. Access to data is attainable through existing avenues and is targeted for student and teacher growth. Yet, at the present time, the applicant states that, under the capacity to receive and match student level data PK-12 and higher ed, processes are in place but not maximized.</p> <p>4. In relation to the capacity to receive and match student level data PK-12 and higher ed, the applicant attests that FERPA regulations will be followed, but it is unclear how this will be ascertained.</p> <p>This section is rated in the medium range.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The STX360 Consortium applicant states the following.</p> <p>a. All consortium schools are dedicated to K-12 capacity building and meet the 40% or higher low socio-economic threshold. However, while it is noted that by working together the consortium schools would have more collaborative interaction and the opportunity to share resources, a description of the process to select the schools in the application is not evident.</p>		

b. The table/chart provided lists the participating LEA's, schools, total number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high-need students, and participating educators, as required in the application.

c. The five districts in the STX360 Consortium are as follows: Mathis ISD, Skidmore-Tynan ISD, San Diego ISD, Brooks County ISD, and Riviera ISD.

This section is rated in the medium range.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	3
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

1. The transformation model, with 7 aligned critical success factors (CSFs), is being utilized as the theory of change vehicle. Evidence to support the model includes the following:

a. intensive professional development (PD) for teachers, administrators, and support staff; PD provided by regional service agencies and Texas A & M- Kingsville; PD through the trainer-of-trainer model,

b. curriculum alignment (with Common Core and college and career readiness standards),

c. analysis of data to drive student achievement (using DMAC software and multiple data sources),

d. administrative evaluations (i.e. by the Superintendent for principals),

e. peer-to-peer walkthroughs to monitor implementation of initiatives and progress,

f. monitoring of the Model Classroom Project inputs and outcomes,

g. increasing learning time (i.e. extending the school day, bell-to-bell instruction),

h. engagement of parents and students (i.e. parent liaison, increased interaction),

i. improving school climate (i.e. increased engagement of administrators and students), and

j. increasing teacher quality (i.e. professional development, peer-to-peer walkthroughs).

2. While the transformation model contains components (a-j above) that impact implementation of the applicant's plan, clarification is needed to determine why the model chosen best fits the need for reform in STX360, what the targeted goals are for implementation, what the shift (transformation) would look like (an overall view), and how the plan would be scaled up to translate beyond the present population served.

3. The applicant has stated that parent liaisons will be hired to promote and assist with parent engagement. Continuity and consistency of such services can promote family involvement. However, the continued funding for the positions is a cause for concern or is problematic since it is not clear how the positions will continue to be funded once the grant ends.

4. The STX360 narrative states that the charted goals and CSFs are aligned. In (A)(4) charts are provided that show proposed activities, timelines, deliverables, and parties responsible for implementation. However, the information in both charts is more organizational than student-oriented. It includes such information as developing job descriptions, hiring personnel, purchasing technology, etc.

This section is rated in the medium range.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(4)

1. The applicant states that the comprehensive needs assessment model (CNA) was used to establish LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes.

2. A process for sharing and assessing data was implemented.

- a. Data was gathered, such as TAKS and teacher failure rates.
- b. Faculty stakeholders reviewed, disaggregated, and analyzed the data.
- c. Instructional determinations were made based on data analysis outcomes.

Implementation of the process listed in a-c above supports improved understanding of students' needs (across subgroups at all grade levels and in all districts), provides a focused base for instructional decisions, and opens opportunities for increased personalization of student learning environments.

3. The STX360 narrative states that the charted goals and critical success factors are aligned. In (A)(4) charts are provided that show proposed activities, timelines, deliverables, and parties responsible for implementation. However, the information in both charts is more organizational than student-oriented. It includes such information as developing job descriptions, hiring personnel, purchasing technology, etc.

(A)(4)(a)

1. Based on the summative assessment data from 2010-2011, the STX360 Consortium performs

- a. above the region in 6th grade math and 8th grade science,
- b. above the region and state in 7th grade writing and 10th grade science, and
- c. at or below the region and below the state in all other tested areas and grade levels.

2. The STX360 goals, through 2014-2015, seem reasonable, ambitious, and attainable in comparison with reported local, regional, and state performance. Whether the goal of 100% for 2015-2016 is realistic depends on how it is determined/calculated.

(A)(4)(b)

While the decreasing achievement gaps chart provided specific baseline subgroup achievement data and denoted gaps and desired targets, there was no explanation for addressing achievement gaps.

(A)(4)(c)

The graduation rates chart provided overall data regarding the baseline performance and desired targets of the specific STX360 high schools listed. However, there was no subgroup data provided in the chart or explanation/narrative for addressing the graduation rate.

(A)(4)(d)

The college enrollment chart provided data and desired outcomes for the specific STX360 high schools listed. However, there was no subgroup data provided in the chart or explanation/narrative for addressing the college enrollment rate.

(A)(4)(e)

This section was optional and not submitted or rated.

In sections (A)(4)(c & d), having subgroup data for graduation rates and college enrollment would help clarify how individual subgroups perform and ultimately impact overall performance.

This section is rated in the low range.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

1. Based on the scores provided by STX360, inconsistency in student achievement is present across subgroups and districts. District-wide results indicated that reading gains were evident in most subgroups while math had far fewer gains.

a. From year-to-year, LEP and Special Ed. subgroup scores vary within and across districts.

b. Skidmore-Tynan ISD exhibits the highest performance across all subgroups and districts. The remaining 4 districts have gains in various subgroups (i.e. Mathis ISD-LEP-30%; Brooks ISD-Hispanic-16%) but continue to score below state expectations.

c. Graduation rates vary across district comparisons, with 2011-2012 rates ranging from 73.5% to 96.7%. However, gains are evident in 4 out of 5 districts, with the one district not showing gains decreasing by .1% (one-tenth of a percent). Additionally, gains ranged from 1% to 10.1% from 2010-2011 to 2011-2012.

d. College enrollment scores show an overall decline of .68%. Three of five high schools showed a decline in college enrollment

2. While it was documented in(A)(4) that a process for sharing and assessing data was implemented with educators, how student achievement/performance data was shared with additional stakeholders (i.e. students, parents) in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services was unclear.

3. There is no evidence that targeted measures are in place to address the needs of the lowest achieving schools.

This section is rated in the low range.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)**5****3****(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

1. In regard to STX360, transparency is evident through the following:

a. voluntary posting of salaries, "that provides extensive detail" on all salaries, annually through the Texas Association of School Administrators and Texas Association of School Board members,

b. the publishing of all teacher and administrator salaries in *The Texas Tribune*,

c. posting of personnel and non-personnel expenditures through the Academic Excellence Indicator System via the Texas Education Agency webpage,

d. and posting of financial accountability information through the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (in compliance with the Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, §109.1001). The applicant states that the FIRST system discloses the quality of local management and decision-making processes that impact allocation of financial resources.

Where applicable, links to websites are provided in the application.

The STX360 Consortium (as individual districts) participates, voluntarily and by statute, in multiple reporting avenues that support transparency. However, it is not clear to what extent the non-personnel expenditures are "broken out/down" to reflect individual school-level expenditures.

This section is rated in the medium range.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	2
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As validated by personnel from regional service center 2 in Corpus Christi, Texas, the STX360 Consortium districts are provided autonomy within the state's legal parameters (and federal regulations where applicable) through the use of Rtl. In Rtl, individual student's needs are identified and addressed through personalized learning supports. 2. The applicant contends that public schools in Texas use a variety of structures, strategies, and interventions to meet the needs of students (i.e. academic teams/houses, smaller learning communities). 3. It is uncertain whether additional avenues of autonomy are present, whether other conditions for supporting personalized learning environments are in place, or whether other sources were used to validate the extent of autonomy available since they were not listed or mentioned. <p>This section is rated in the low range.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The STX360 Consortium partners sought stakeholder input and planned for future engagement as listed below. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Community, school board, district, and campus meetings were held. b. Site-based teams provided 100% signatory consent. c. Letters of Support were provided from key stakeholders, including mayors, judges, business owners, school officials, and other community leaders. d. The Coalition for Community Schools toolkit resource was used to plan for the future. 2. While the STX360 stakeholders were given multiple opportunities to provide input into the proposal, it is unclear if the feedback was utilized to refine or revise the plan. Utilization of stakeholder feedback supports the premise that reform plans are living documents that remain fluid throughout and beyond the grant period and that, by collaboratively formulating and revising the plan, results achieved translate beyond the educational community. <p>This section was rated in the high range.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Specific areas of need are targeted for each school in the STX360 Consortium, such as Mathis ISD-LEP (-10). No rationale is present for the areas of needed improvement that were chosen. 2. While the applicant cross references information regarding the targeted gaps and subgroups (bar graphs in section (B)(3)), a rationale for the choices is not evident. 3. A chart is used to organize the proposed activities for implementing personalized environments. The charted information (under Activity) provides an emphasis on the common planning time focus, data (from accessing it to utilization for planning instruction), and ensuring that high school students have PGPs. However, there does not seem to be a clear link from the current state to the intended outcomes. Clarification is needed to understand what is in place now, what steps will be taken to address gaps, how 		

the implementation will take place, how progress will be determined, what outcomes will be expected, and how adjustments will be made as the plan is implemented.

This section is rated in the low range.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant notes that a new state assessment (STAAR) will address college and career readiness proficiency levels for all students and will align with college and career ready coursework. 2. The STX360 Consortium consistently states that students have opportunities to obtain certifications. However, it is not clear if this opportunity is equitable across the districts. It is also stated that students have the opportunity to earn dual credits and that all consortium districts have articulation agreements in place with institutions of higher education. 3. Personalized learning environments are supported (for example, multiple college and career pathways/options-dual credit, certifications, instructionally focused calendar, extended learning time, flexible scheduling, PGPs). 4. Data disaggregation will be utilized to inform instructional decisions such as: determining student performance in readiness coursework and structuring tutorial interventions. 5. Evidence of stakeholder engagement and support activities is provided: parent meetings, articulation agreements, and business partnerships. 6. Fieldtrips and workplace observations are utilized to provide real world experiences. It is unclear what additional opportunities students will experience in order to be consistent with the philosophy/accomplish the goal of global learning. 7. The applicant states that students will have PGPs and multiple pathway and coursework options. How students will be trained to manage their learning is unclear, particularly high needs students. 8. Obtaining Master's degrees in order to teach dual credit courses is part of the plan. It is unclear if this is a requirement to teach dual credit courses. 9. While the applicant has strategies, activities, and actions in place, articulation of the vision and how the components described in (C)(1) support it need clarification. <p>This section is rated in the medium range.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	13
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant's plan addresses teaching and leading through the following examples: use of PLCs, common planning time, proximity of classrooms, intensive professional development, establishing a personalized learning context, building on best practices (Texas Project Share), and use of the teacher evaluation system/process being developed by the state. The Texas evaluation instrument being developed, TeachScape, will be used to appraise educators. Also, value-added measures will be applied to the evaluation process to make it more robust. 		

2. Students' needs are/will be addressed through such avenues as increased learning time, adapting content and input, computer assisted learning, and differentiated instruction.

3. It is unclear how performance-based pay will be implemented to increase student access to effective and highly effective personnel or how increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas (such as special education) will take place.

4. A chart providing activities, timelines, deliverables, and person(s) responsible is provided and outlines those components necessary to support a viable personalized learning environment.

This section is rated in the medium range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	8
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The applicant states that the organization of the Consortium districts will include a shepherd (appointed by the superintendent) as liaison to work with principals and STX360 district coordinators. However, no organizational chart or explanation for the Consortium's structure and governance is present.</p> <p>(b) STX360 attests that leadership teams will be established and be given autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school-level budgets.</p> <p>(c, d, & e) The STX360 implementation of mastery learning opportunities is demonstrated through the use of multiple learning avenues, such as those listed below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. online learning, dual credit, credit recovery, and credit acceleration 2. teacher monitoring and interaction 3. systematic assessment 4. use of multiple measures to gauge learning (tests, portfolios, projects) 5. ensuring that students have access to resources <p>In previous sections, the applicant has provided an explanation of the Rtl process to address the needs of all learners. However, further explanation or examples of resources, materials, strategies, and/or practices accessible to all students and to be used for promoting personalized learning environments is needed.</p> <p>This section is rated in the medium range.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a, b, c, & d) STX360 maintains that stakeholders will have access to necessary resources both in and out of school, such as online textbooks and learning opportunities, technology (such as mifi) and learning systems, and equitable internet access. Stakeholders will have access to systems that include human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data through such avenues as the Texas Education Agency (school report card and Texas Academic Excellence Indicator).</p>		

A chart of activities with the supporting timelines, deliverables, and person(s) responsible is included in the application.

The process of providing appropriate technical support to stakeholders is unclear.

Additional explanations regarding the use of in and out of school resources for supporting student learning and for accessing data are needed for clarity.

This section is rated in the low medium range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. STX360 has chosen Stufflebeam's CIPP Model of Evaluation to implement, monitor, and evaluate continuous improvement. The model will allow STX360 to determine "the degree of transformation accomplished based on increase of teacher effectiveness, school leader effectiveness, increase in student achievement, creation of a community centered school and the development processes on individuals and the campus dynamic, systemic change." STX360 also notes that "The evaluations will be used to keep stakeholders informed and for the STX360 collaborative to review findings and examine whether program plans and activities need to be changed; issue program accountability reports; and make bottom-line assessment of the program's progress." 2. Additionally, the CIPP Model allows for summative and formative reporting measures to monitor student achievement progress and provides process and product evaluations. Questions that lead to assessment of the state of transformation are asked (i.e. "What are the problems?", "What are our actions?", "What should be done and is it being done correctly?"). 3. Ongoing communication with stakeholders, stakeholder input to guide decision-making, and use of feedback to make modifications are part of the CIPP Model. 4. In the chart provided, all timelines are the same. The feasibility of all activities beginning and ending in the exact timeframe could be of concern. <p>This section was rated in the medium range.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. STX360 has put a process in place to ensure ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The STX360 Council was formulated and will meet at least quarterly to receive stakeholder input and feedback. b. A website will be created (and maintained by TAMUK, the university partner) so that stakeholders and others can access information and provide input. c. Blog and chat opportunities will be provided for stakeholders to give input and feedback. d. Quarterly reports will be given at district board meetings. 2. Strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders are critical components of a high-quality plan and ensure that engagement and feedback from stakeholders are based on up-to-date information and provide a basis of collaborative efforts and buy- 		

in for the success of plan implementation and subsequent results. The applicant has provided multiple avenues for communication and engagement to take place.

This section was rated in the high range.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

While STX360 provided tables with performance measures, the rationale for selecting the measures, how the measures will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to a proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern, and how it will review and improve the measures over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress were not evident.

This section was rated in the low range.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

1. While there was a chart with activities, timelines, deliverables, and persons responsible aligned to the goals and CSFs, section (E)(4) was not labeled and the charted information was not clearly directed to the information/response requested in item (E)(4).

2. However, several components of (E)(4) were in other sections of the application, specifically in section (A)(3).

Evidence from (A)(3) is listed below.

a. intensive professional development (PD) for teachers, administrators, and support staff; PD provided by regional service agencies and Texas A &M- Kingsville; PD through the trainer-of-trainer model,

b. curriculum alignment (with Common Core and college and career readiness standards),

c. analysis of data to drive student achievement (using DMAC software and multiple data sources),

d. administrative evaluations (i.e. by the Superintendent for principals),

e. peer-to-peer walkthroughs to monitor implementation of initiatives and progress,

f. monitoring of the Model Classroom Project inputs and outcomes,

g. increasing learning time (i.e. extending the school day, bell-to-bell instruction),

h. engagement of parents and students (i.e. parent liaison, increased interaction),

i. improving school climate (i.e increased engagement of administrators and students), and

j. increasing teacher quality (i.e. professional development, peer-to-peer walkthroughs).

This section was rated in the low medium range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

1. The STX360 budget includes those items deemed crucial to the consortium's plan and will support its implementation (i.e. technology purchases, hiring of personnel).
 2. Budgeted components were broken down and organized. Projected figures were realistic for implementation.
 3. As stated in the application, the rationale for the Master's degrees stems from teaching dual credit classes. It is unclear whether the degree is a requirement to teach dual credit courses. The rationale for paying for administrative doctoral degrees needs clarification/further explanation.
 4. Personnel to be hired (such as a PK teacher) seem to appear in the budget but are not tied back to the plan/application.
 5. While the bulk of the budget is self-explanatory (for example, Teacher Conference Attendance Stipends), not all items are clear in terms of the expenditures. It seems that some items in the Project-Level Itemized Costs might have been adjusted (one RTTT Tech per 5 districts-\$30,000 per year for 4 years with a cost of \$540,000 listed).
 6. It is unclear if funding from LEA, State, and other Federal entities will be available to support the reform effort (i.e. grants, student enrollment impact on the budget, consistency of local, state, and federal revenues).
 7. One-time versus recurring costs were not delineated.
- This section is rated in the low end of the medium range.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)**10****2****(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Concerns about long-term sustainability have been voiced in other sections.

A general vision regarding sustainability is presented (such as behavioral shifts, building capacity, continuity of training, seeking grants, increasing student enrollment). Community and business support are also listed as potential support pieces. A budget for long-term sustainability is not present.

Timelines, activities, or proposed action steps for sustainability are not present. Direct tie back to goals and vision is not evident.

This section is rated in the low range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:		
1. Partnerships and relationships exist within the community context (CVS, Lions Club, IHEs, local regional service centers).		
2. The applicant has established 5 items of importance for a parent liaison to target.		
3. The Coalition for Community Schools logic model and toolkit will be used to inform needs.		
4. Not fully defined are the population-level desired results. Three targeted performance measures are listed.		

5. A comprehensive plan for implementing the Competitive Preference Priority is not evident. A more expansive view of the interaction of partners with the consortium members, proposed engagement of the parent liaison, building of internal and external stakeholder engagement to affect change would provide clarity. It is unclear how the applicant would align results, resources, and services to impact student needs and learning.

This section is rated in the low range.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: <p>Throughout the application, the STX360 Consortium focuses on transformation through intense professional development (local regional service center, IHE), utilizing the Model Classroom Project, implementing state systems (college and career readiness, evaluation), engaging stakeholders, providing stakeholder access to technology, providing multiple opportunities for student engagement and success, and collaboratively sharing and building on strengths in existence across the STX360 districts. Research-based references (Marzano, Spillane) are used to reinforce the applicant's plan.</p> <p>The STX360 Consortium has provided a basis for potential reform to be implemented. Further analysis of needs, additionally aligning the focus and supporting measures, and presenting a more robust articulation of the vision would provide clarity of the plan.</p> <p>Through the examples listed above, and other components of the plan, the applicant meets Absolute Priority 1.</p>		

Total	210	92
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